

PUBLIC HEALTH

Question Additive Danger

► **CHEMICAL ADDITIVES** in food have caused less injury to health than the fear of them generated by scare headlines in newspapers.

This was reported by Dr. J. H. Foulger, director of medical research, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Wilmington, Del., to a House interstate commerce subcommittee studying the additives.

The industrial health records of his company showed that even though many of the new chemicals came into use within the last 20 years, the health of personnel exposed to them continuously, and to a greater degree than the general public, was improving, not getting worse.

Dr. Foulger was one member of a panel of scientists headed by Dr. William J. Darby, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tenn., who testified concerning the relative safety or danger of the additives.

Use of the food additives is certainly not new and there are many justifications for using them, Dr. Darby said.

Properly used, they help in retaining the nutritional value of the food, maintain its keeping quality, make it more attractive to the consumer and provide aids in processing.

But they should not be used to disguise faulty processes and products, to deceive the consumer or when their use would result in less nutritive value.

The panel generally agreed food additives were here to stay but that the precise use and amount of the additive had to be determined on an individual basis.

Almost anything ingested could be considered injurious to health, depending on how much and how often it was ingested, they concurred.

Dr. Foulger said that within four or five years medical science would have effective methods for running toxicity tests directly on man instead of on laboratory animals, and he advised that nothing whatever be done to "freeze" the testing programs now being conducted.

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the infected area is badly blistered. Lotions and wet compresses are the best treatment in these instances.

Many people can be immunized against poison ivy by receiving increasingly stronger injections of the oil to lower their sensitivity to it. Fifteen doses of an alcohol extract of poison ivy will usually provide protection for two years.

Other panel members included chairman Dr. Claude E. Forkner and Drs. Mary H. Loveless and Douglas T. Torre, Cornell University Medical College, and Dr. Samuel Peck, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. A report of the conference appears in *New York Medicine* (July 5).

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Youth Month

► **OCTOBER WILL** be National Science Youth Month this year. National organizations are cooperating in a month-long action program to inspire and inform students as to the opportunities, needs and qualifications of scientific and technological manpower.

Millions of youth in the nation's public, private and parochial secondary schools provide the nucleus of this emphasis on science activities of the new school year. Organization of science clubs and science fairs in all parts of the country will be stressed.

A calendar of events has been prepared and information assembled for those in local and regional organizations who wish to cooperate.

A science youth organizations working group appointed by the President's Committee on Scientists and Engineers is spearheading National Science Youth Month, with SCIENCE SERVICE, Washington, D. C., as the coordinating agency. This is the second year that October has been National Science Youth Month.

The following national organizations and activities are cooperating: American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Chemical Society, American Medical Association, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, Junior Engineering Technical Society, Manufacturing Chemists Association, National Association of Manufacturers, National Merit Scholarships, National Science Fair, National Science Foundation, National Science Teachers Association, Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, President's Committee on Scientists and Engineers,

Science Achievement Awards Program, Science Clubs of America, SCIENCE SERVICE and Science Talent Search.

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MEDICINE

Poison Ivy Victims Will Not Spread It to Others

► **PEOPLE BROKEN** out with poison ivy will not spread it to others, once the original oil has been removed from the skin, doctors learned at a practitioners' conference at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, New York.

Any fluid oozing from the blistered areas may still have a little of the oil in it, but it is unlikely that another person could develop a case of poison ivy from it, Dr. Carl T. Nelson, a panel member and professor of dermatology from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, said.

Practical treatment of poison ivy centers around removing the oil from the skin by thorough washing with soap and water as soon after contact as possible. After approximately six hours the poison becomes "fixed" in the skin and washing will no longer help. After washing, any remaining oil is neutralized by a potassium permanganate bath which the victim should sit or lie in for 20 minutes.

Family history is of no importance in determining who gets poison ivy. More important are individual skin characteristics such as the amount of sweating and the thickness and acid value of the skin.

Ointments and creams, especially those containing anesthetics should not be used if